

Off to College?



Know the facts about meningococcal disease

- **Meningococcal disease is a serious illness.** The disease can cause blood infections and meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord). It can lead to brain damage, disability, and death.
- **Common symptoms of meningitis include** stiff neck, headache, fever, sensitivity to light, sleepiness, confusion, and seizures.
- **Meningococcal disease is a concern on college campuses, especially for students living in dorms.** In Washington, 20 to 30 cases are reported each year, including deaths.
- **A booster dose of meningococcal vaccine is now recommended at age 16 or older.** Even if you got a dose before age 16, you need an additional dose before entering college.

Vaccination is your best shot at preventing meningococcal disease. There are two types of meningococcal vaccine. Both vaccines are at least 85 percent effective at preventing 4 of the 5 most common forms of meningococcal disease. Ask your doctor which vaccine you need.

The meningococcal vaccines are recommended for:

- Children and adolescents aged 11 to 18 years.
- College freshmen who live in dorms.
- People with weakened immune systems.
- Travelers to countries where meningococcal disease is common.

Ask your doctor about the benefits and risks of meningococcal vaccines.

For more information about the meningococcal disease as well as the vaccines, visit:

- www.doh.wa.gov/Immunization
- www.nmaus.org
- www.acha.org
- www.cdc.gov/vaccines
- www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/risk-community.html

Ask your doctor or student health clinic about which other vaccines you need to be ready for college!

Be sure to keep a record of all your immunizations.

Adapted from California Department of Health Services, Immunization Branch materials.
If you have a disability and need this document in another format, please call 1-800-5250127 (TDD/TTY call 711).